COMICO four issue mini-series

JUSTICE MACHINE

FEATURING THE Elementals

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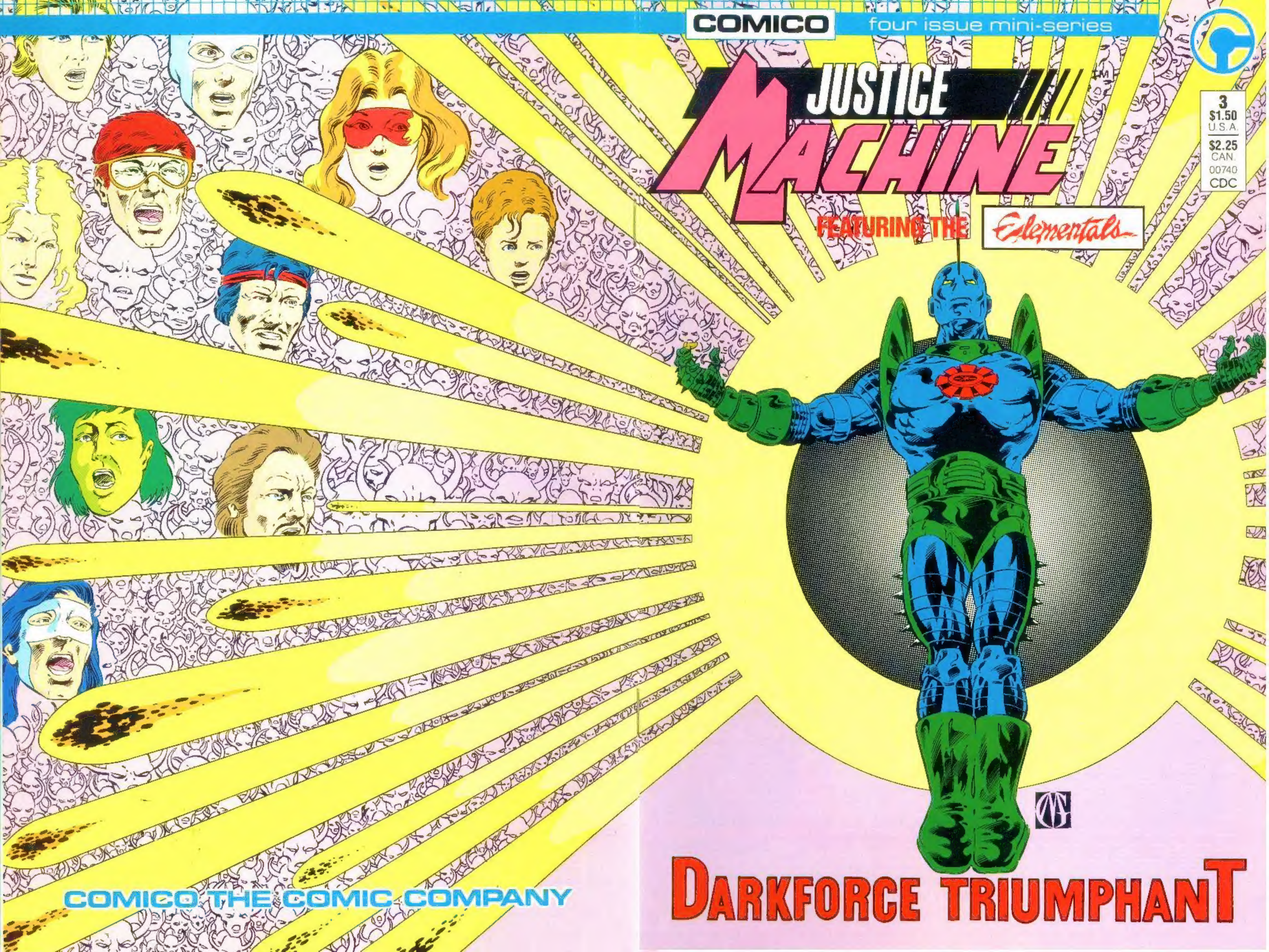

DARKFORCE TRIUMPHANT

COMICO THE COMIC COMPANY

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DARKFORCE TRIUMPHANT

JM EDITORIAL

So, the Justice Machine and the Elementals are down for the count, huh? Don't bet on it.

Darkforce and the invading horde of interdimensional demons are mere moments away from their inevitable conquest of Georwell? Again, don't bet on it.

Bill Willingham will write next issue's editorial? Don't count him out, but when you produce as many mind-blowing pages of panoramic pencilling each month as Bill does, one must expect such things as eating, sleeping, and editorializing to occasionally be squeezed out of the daily routine. I, for one, am pleased as punch just to have the man scripting this mini-series.

So, what *can* you bet on next issue, the final episode in our pulse-pounding, galactic drama? More action, mayhem, and table-turning surprises than you can shake an Uru hammer at, that's what!

But, for the moment, let's talk about some of the other people working on this book. **Bob Pinaha,** for example, is the fellow responsible for lettering not only this series, but virtually all of Comico's books. Bob has the integrity and loyalty that most publishers wish all their employees had. Let me tell you, when you're running late and the deadline was yesterday, send the job to Bob and it'll be back on your desk the day *before* yesterday! Not only that, but the style and precision he lavishes upon his work are just amazing. He really helps make a page stand out. If you don't believe me, look at a current issue of ELEMENTALS or MAGE for further verification.

If Bob Pinaha is a first-rate letterer, then **Tom Vincent** is easily his equal in the coloring department. Since we work so far in advance, I've yet to actually see Tom's handling of JM, but his work on ROBOTECH MASTERS and THE MACROSS SAGA is just incredible. I originally met Tom when I was up at the Comico offices for the initial JM contract negotiations. At the time, while I had a certain look in mind for JM's revival, and knew what the black-and-white art would look like, I had yet to find a colorist who pleased me. I really didn't know Tom or his work then, but when he pulled out some of his samples, I nearly had a heart attack! Someone upstairs had apparently been listening to my artistic prayers. Perhaps the only person who's more excited than I am about seeing the published product is Tom himself!

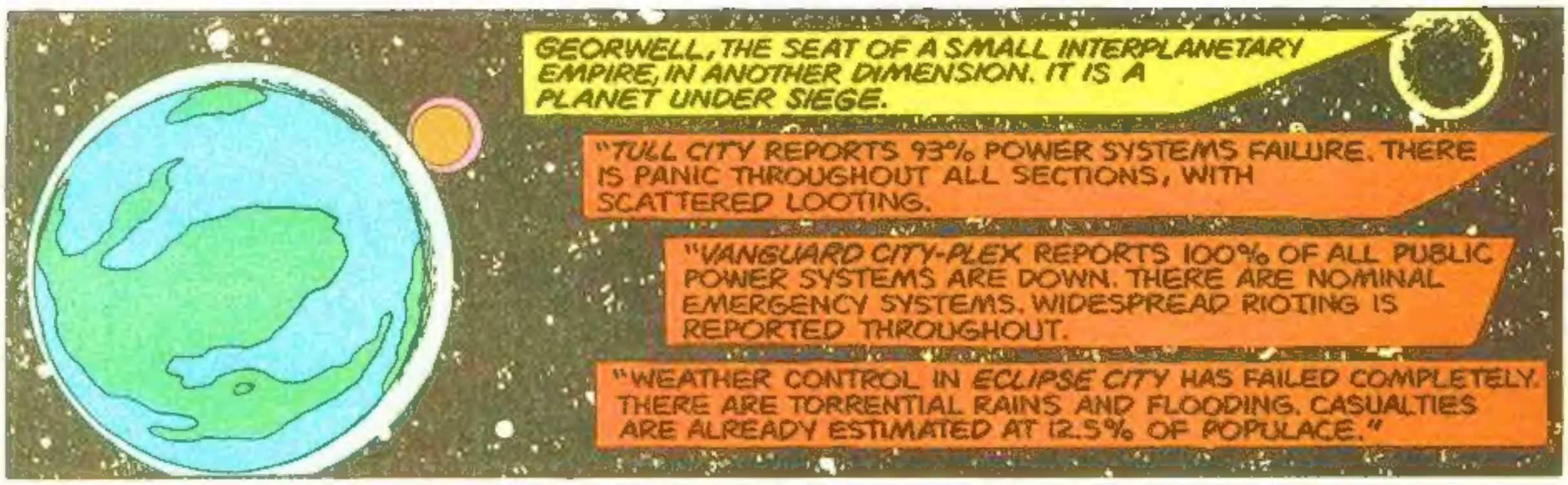
And who is it that organizes this whole shebang, making sure that everyone gets their assignments done and their paychecks on time? **Diana Schutz** — that's who — a nicer editor you'll never meet, unless you miss your deadlines, that is. Boy, she sure can be a nag when your pages have been "in the mail" for over a week, but then, that's her job, and she does it with great patience and fortitude.

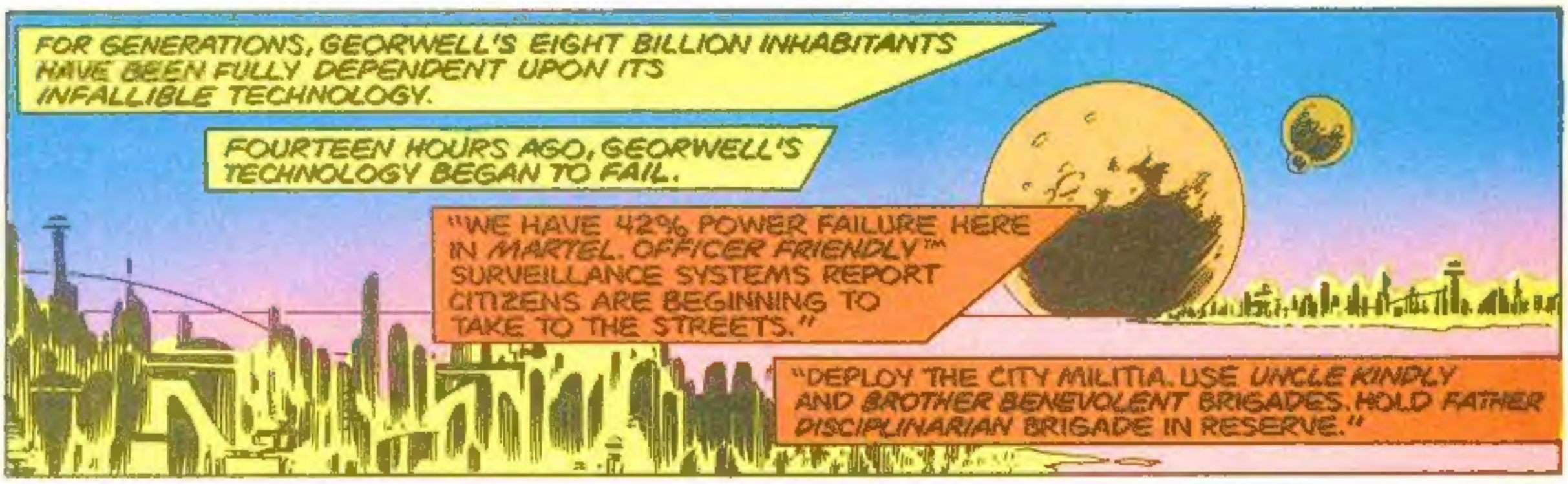
Finally, where would we be without art director **Gerry Giovinco** calling me up every once in a while to say, "This arm is too long!" or "Why did you draw Challenger with squirt guns in this panel?" Sometimes he even calls to say, "Hey, that's a great cover you did for issue #3! Keep it up!" To show you what a talented guy he is and that he knows what he's talking about (no, that arm is *not* too long, Gerry), take a look at his terrific JM letters page logo elsewhere in this book. Pretty hot stuff, I must say!

There are a lot of other people involved in this ongoing project, but what say we save a few of those for another time?

Next issue, guess who writes. Go on, I dare you!

—Mike Gustovich





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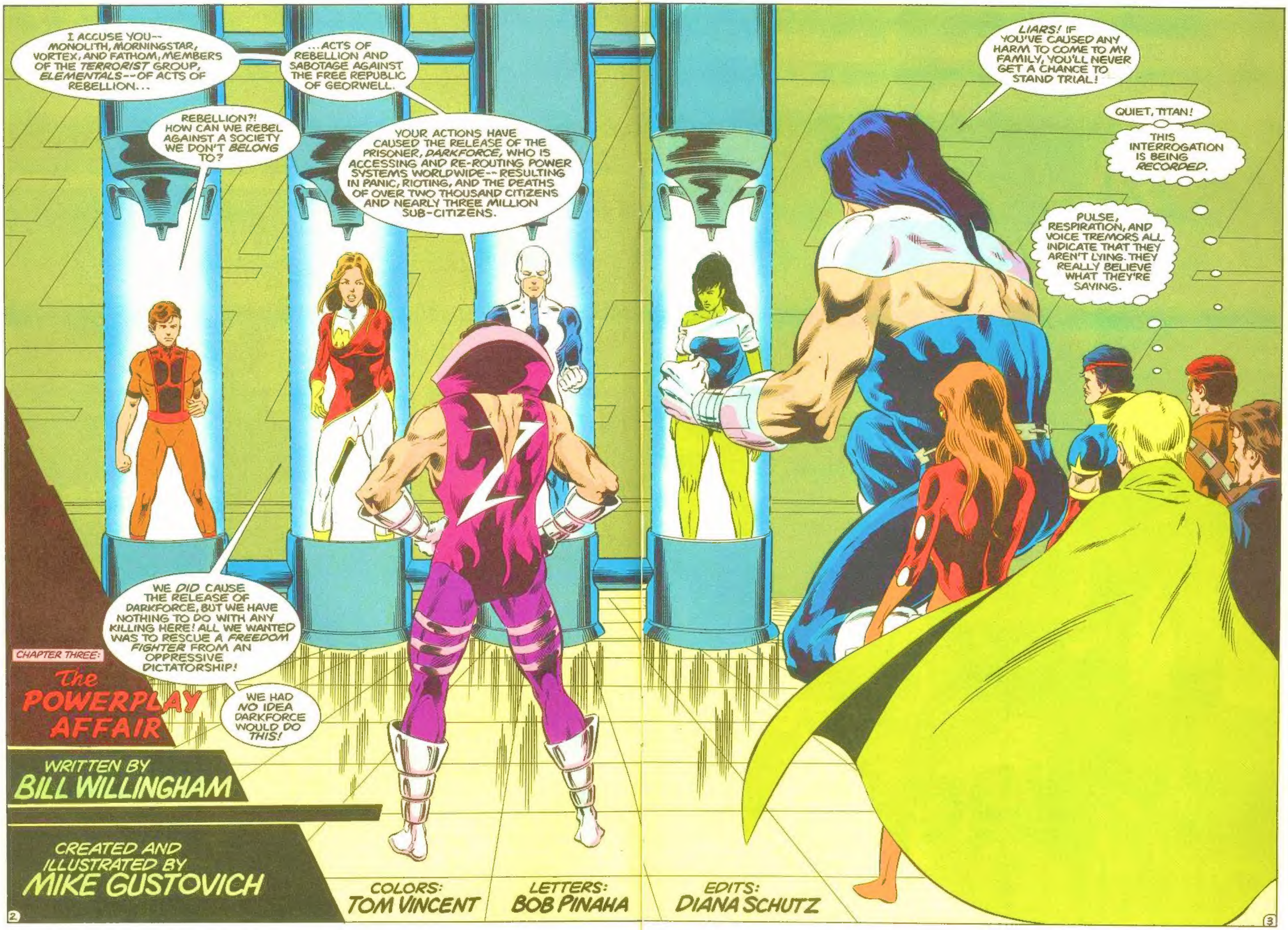

I ACCUSE YOU-- MONOLITH, MORNINGSTAR, VORTEX, AND FATHOM, MEMBERS OF THE TERRORIST GROUP, ELEMENTALS--OF ACTS OF REBELLION...
...ACTS OF REBELLION AND SABOTAGE AGAINST THE FREE REPUBLIC OF GEORWELL.
REBELLION?! HOW CAN WE REBEL AGAINST A SOCIETY WE DON'T BELONG TO?
YOUR ACTIONS HAVE CAUSED THE RELEASE OF THE PRISONER, DARKFORCE, WHO IS ACCESSING AND RE-ROUTING POWER SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE--RESULTING IN PANIC, RIOTING, AND THE DEATHS OF OVER TWO THOUSAND CITIZENS AND NEARLY THREE MILLION SUB-CITIZENS.
WE DID CAUSE THE RELEASE OF DARKFORCE, BUT WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY KILLING HERE! ALL WE WANTED WAS TO RESCUE A FREEDOM FIGHTER FROM AN OPPRESSIVE DICTATORSHIP!
WE HAD NO IDEA DARKFORCE WOULD DO THIS!
LIARS! IF YOU'VE CAUSED ANY HARM TO COME TO MY FAMILY, YOU'LL NEVER GET A CHANCE TO STAND TRIAL!
QUIET, TITAN!
THIS INTERROGATION IS BEING RECORDED.
PULSE, RESPIRATION, AND VOICE TREMORS ALL INDICATE THAT THEY AREN'T LYING. THEY REALLY BELIEVE WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.
CHAPTER THREE:
The POWERPLAY AFFAIR
WRITTEN BY BILL WILLINGHAM
CREATED AND ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE GUSTOVICH
COLORS: TOM VINCENT
LETTERS: BOB PINAHA
EDITS: DIANA SCHUTZ
2
3

SUMMON THE FLEET BACK FROM THE BORDER WORLDS, IMMEDIATELY! HAVE ALL MAJOR FLEET COMMANDERS COME AHEAD BY DIMENSIONAL GATE!

DIMENSIONAL GATE...?

DAMN IT, OF COURSE!

THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT COULD REQUIRE SUCH POWER! DARKFORCE IS CONSTRUCTING A GATEWAY. WITH ALL THIS ENERGY, HE CAN CREATE ONE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TRANSPORT AN ARMY OF MILLIONS!

AND WITH GEORWELL IN SUCH A STATE OF PANIC, MILLIONS WOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO CONQUER A PLANET!

LISTEN...WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT...THIS GUY YOU CALL *DARKFORCE*--WE DIDN'T *KNOW* WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO.

WE AREN'T FROM *GEORWELL*. I DON'T EVEN THINK WE'RE FROM THIS DIMENSION.

WE'RE FROM A PLANET CALLED *EARTH*.

"THERE, **WE** WERE THE HEROES!

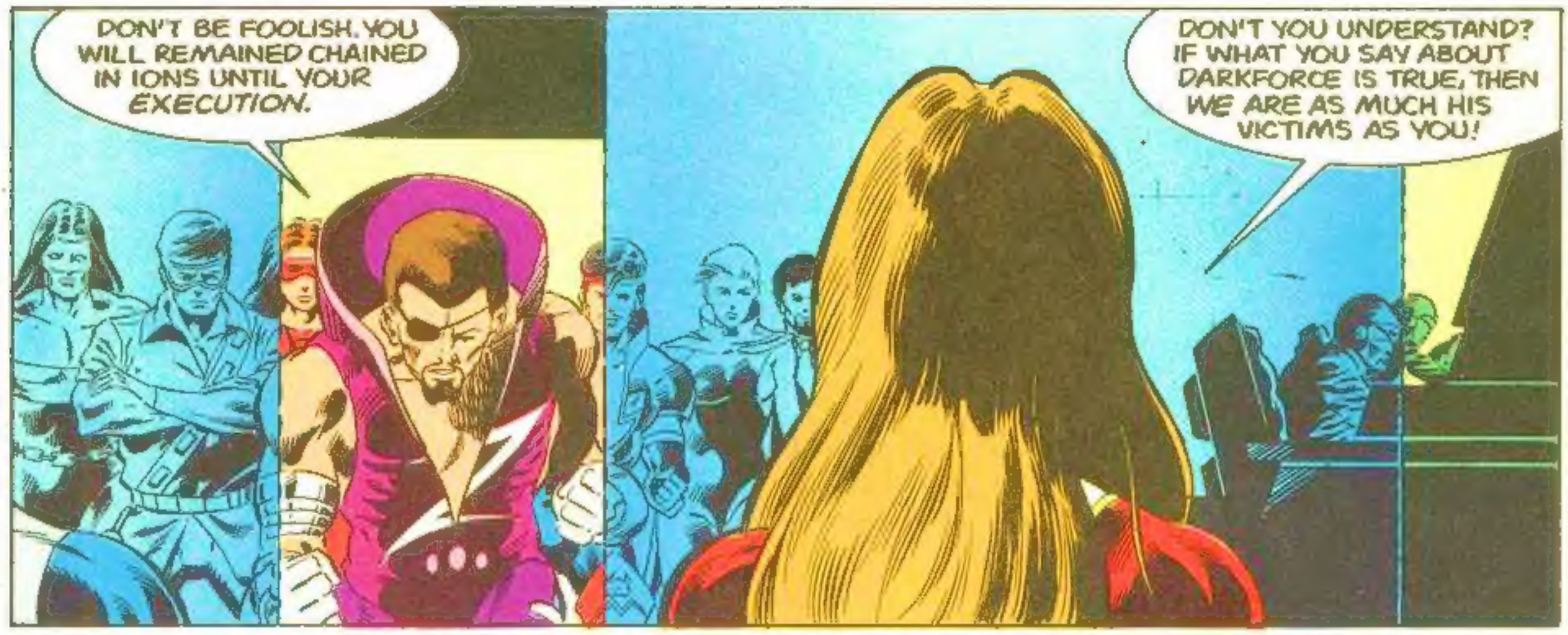
"ON *EARTH*, WE WERE LIKE YOUR *JUSTICE MACHINE*, HERE."

"WE WERE CREATED TO DEFEAT A MAN--A POWERFUL SORCERER NAMED *SAKER*. HE WANTED TO DESTROY OUR WORLD, JUST LIKE YOU SAY DARKFORCE IS TRYING TO DO.

"WE WERE ABLE TO *STOP* SAKER.

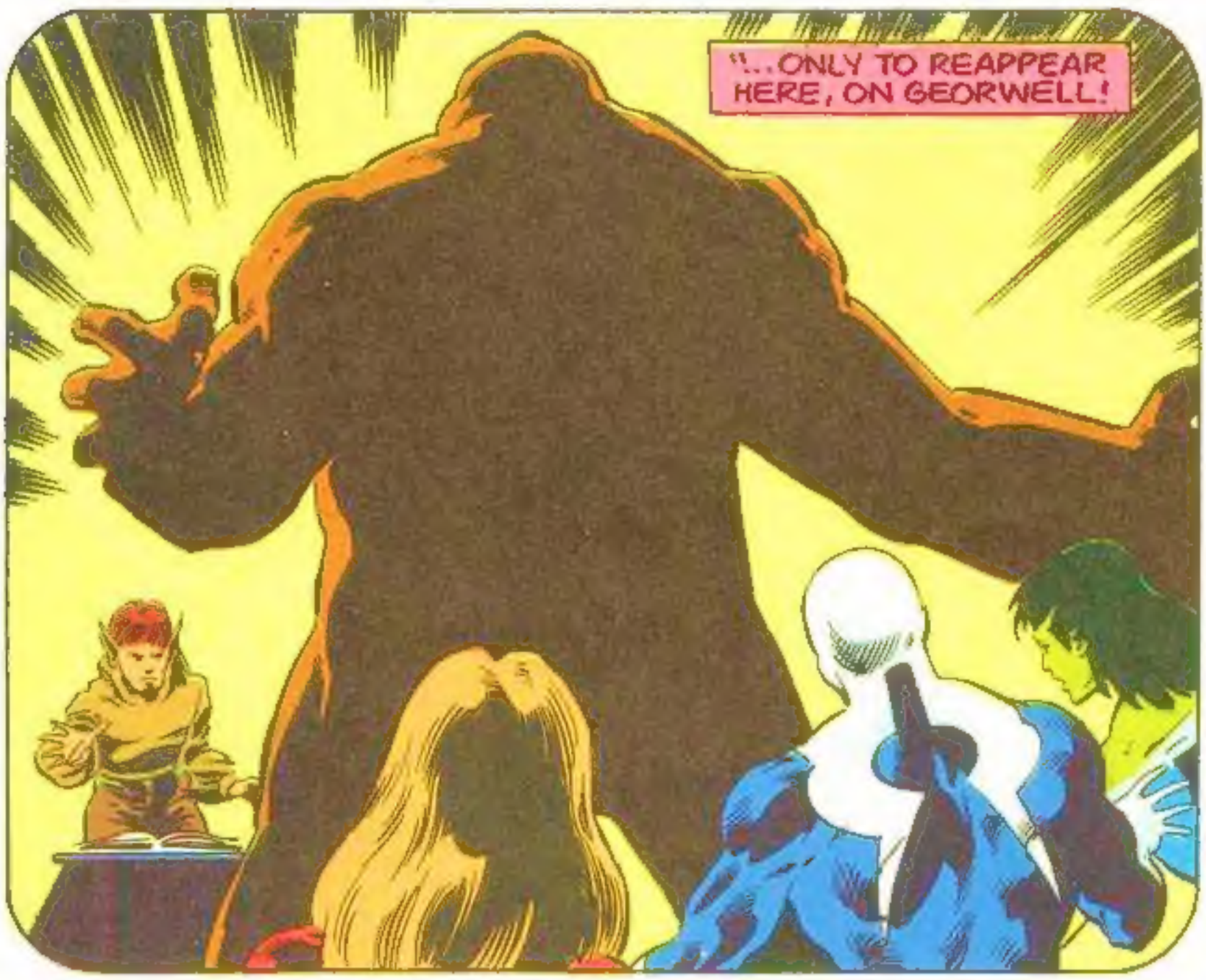
"IF YOU LET US, WE CAN *HELP* YOU STOP DARKFORCE."

TOMMY IS RIGHT. LET US CLEAN UP OUR OWN MESSES.


DON'T BE FOOLISH. YOU WILL REMAINED CHAINED IN IONS UNTIL YOUR EXECUTION.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IF WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT DARKFORCE IS TRUE, THEN WE ARE AS MUCH HIS VICTIMS AS YOU!

"WE WERE MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS ON EARTH...
SORRY, FATHOM. SPIKES AND LEATHER AREN'T MY IDEA OF FASHION.

"...WHEN WITHOUT WARNING, WE DISAPPEARED!


"...ONLY TO REAPPEAR HERE, ON GEORWELL!

"WE WERE BROUGHT HERE BY TAROT, DARKFORCE'S AIDE. HE TAUGHT US ALL ABOUT GEORWELL."

"DARKFORCE WAS DESCRIBED TO US AS A *LIBERATOR*, A LEADER WHO HAD THE TRUE SUPPORT OF THE *PEOPLE* OF GEORWELL.

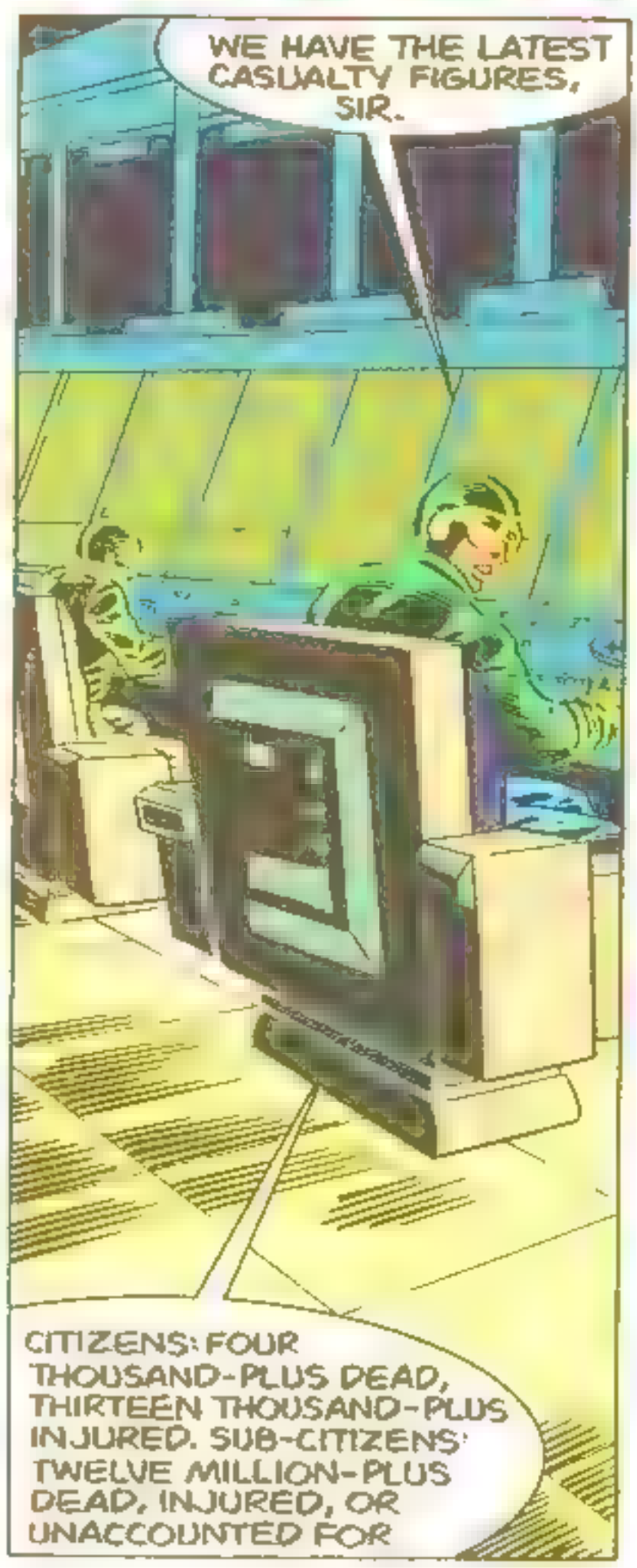
"HE WAS GOING TO LEAD GEORWELL TO FREEDOM. HE WANTED TO DO AWAY WITH YOUR SECRET POLICE AND ENFORCERS LIKE YOUR SO-CALLED *JUSTICE MACHINE*."

THE MACHINE HAS NEVER KILLED AN INNOCENT CITIZEN!
DEMON! CALM DOWN!
SILENCE, CRETIN!

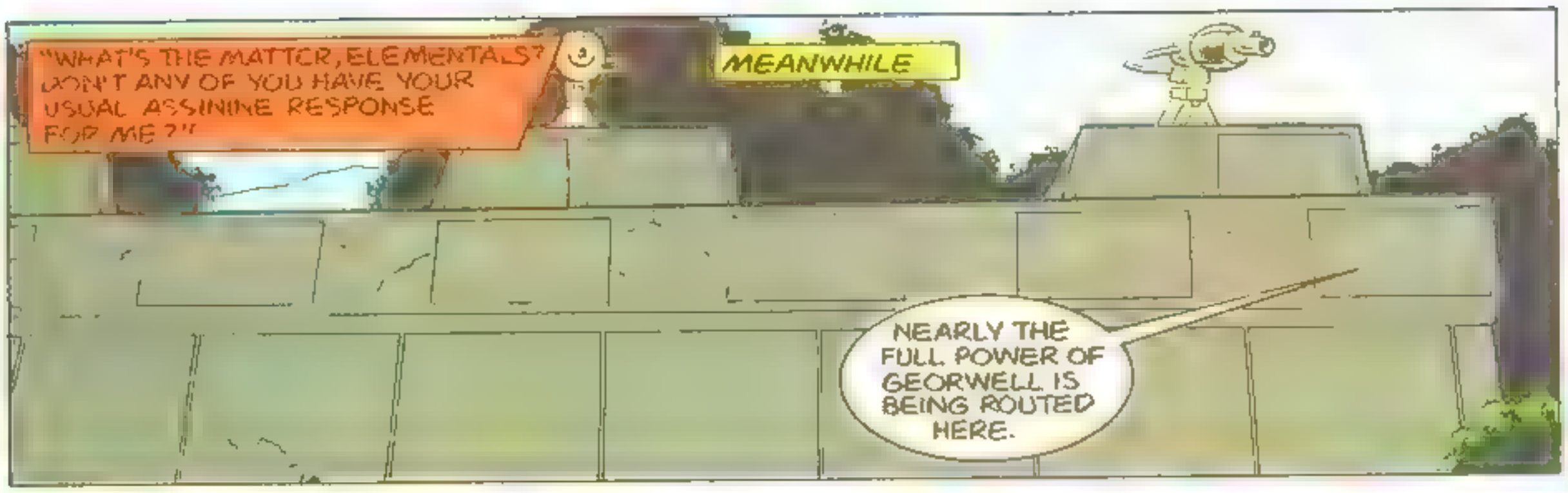
IF HE CANNOT CONTROL HIMSELF IN PUBLIC, REMOVE HIM!
WE EVEN PROTECTED SUB-CITIZENS.

I BELIEVE THE PRISONERS HAVE GIVEN US ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ENSURE A CONVICTION ON ALL COUNTS.
REPORT TO PHYSICAL TRAINING, DEMON.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MACHINERS, I THINK WE COULD ALL USE A SESSION TO WORK OUT OUR AGGRESSIONS.
EVERYONE TO THE TRAINING ROOM.


WE HAVE THE LATEST CASUALTY FIGURES, SIR.
CITIZENS: FOUR THOUSAND-PLUS DEAD, THIRTEEN THOUSAND-PLUS INJURED. SUB-CITIZENS: TWELVE MILLION-PLUS DEAD, INJURED, OR UNACCOUNTED FOR

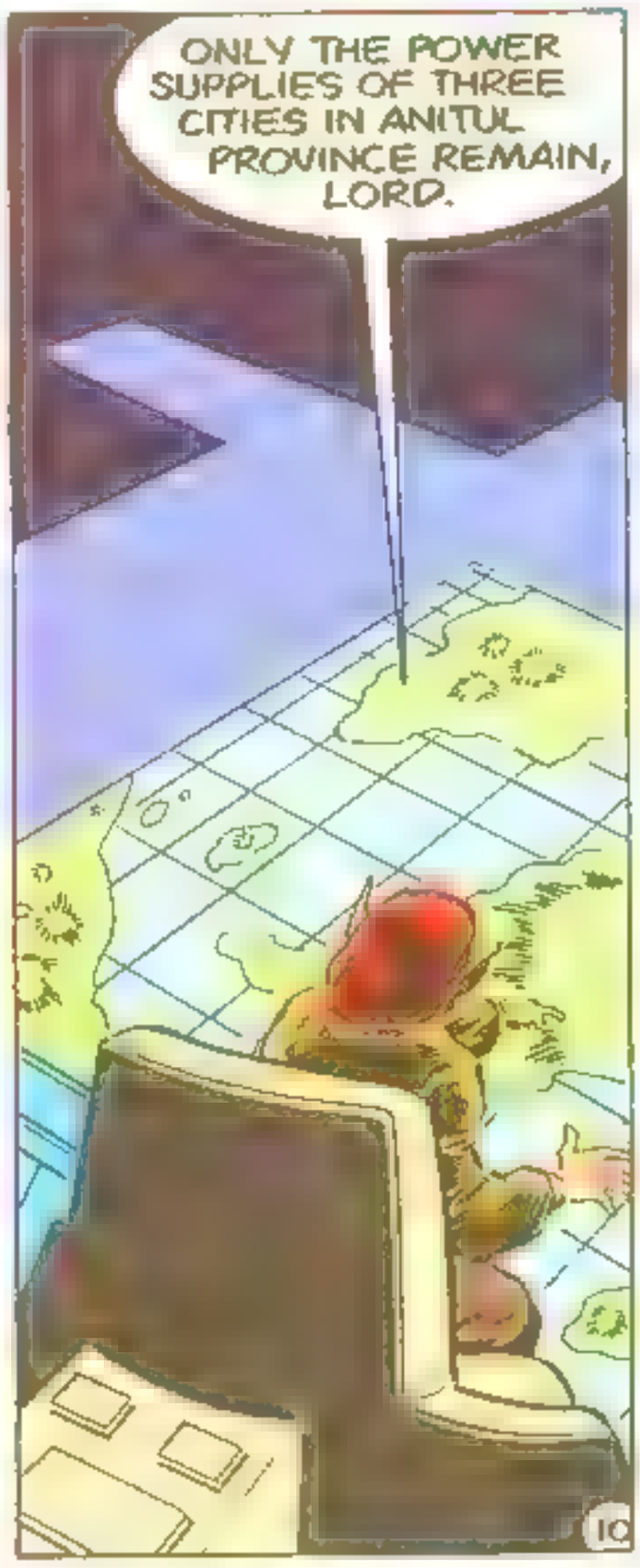
SEE WHAT HAPPENS, ELEMENTALS, WHEN YOU TRY TO INTERFERE? WHEN YOU IMPOSE YOUR BIASED CONCEPTS OF GOOD AND EVIL ON OUR ORDERED SOCIETY?!
IT SEEMS THE ONLY FREEDOMS YOU OFFER US ARE THE FREEDOMS OF THE AFTERLIFE!


"WHAT'S THE MATTER, ELEMENTALS? DON'T ANY OF YOU HAVE YOUR USUAL ASSININE RESPONSE FOR ME?"
MEANWHILE
NEARLY THE FULL POWER OF GEORWELL IS BEING ROUTED HERE.

AS SOON AS THE GATEWAY IS COMPLETED, I WILL OPEN THE WAY TO YOUR UNIVERSE SO THAT YOU CAN SEND ME YOUR ARMY
IT WILL BE AS YOU SAY, DARK LORD, PROVIDED THAT YOU KEEP OUR BARGAIN.

ON THE DAY YOU HAND ME THE THRONE OF GEORWELL, YOU WILL BE FREE...

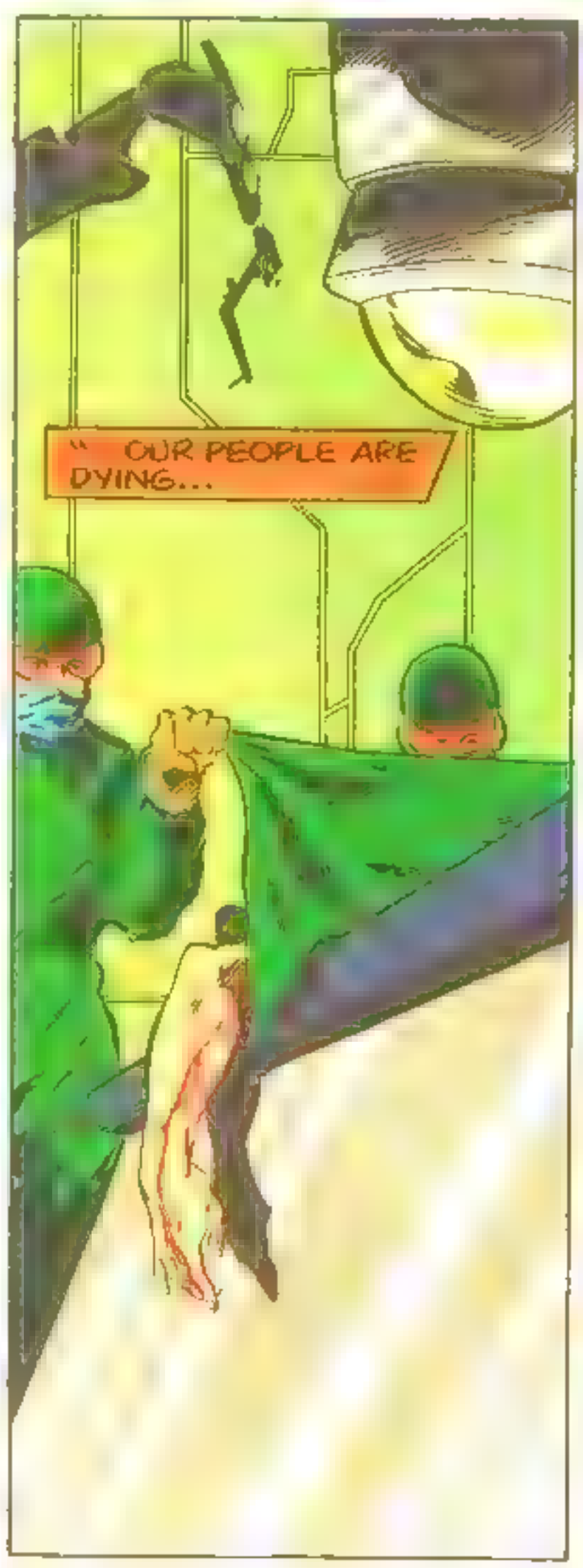
"...FREE OF YOUR HELLISH PLANET, FREE TO PLUNDER A HEAVEN OF YOUR CHOOSING!
"ASSEMBLE YOUR DEMONIC MINIONS. THE DOOR IS ALMOST OPEN!"


ONLY THE POWER SUPPLIES OF THREE CITIES IN ANITUL PROVINCE REMAIN, LORD.

AND...
ELEMENTALS--YOUR CONFESSION OF INVOLVEMENT IN THIS CRISIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE RECORDS IN LIEU OF TRIAL. WE WILL PROCEED IMMEDIATELY WITH YOUR EXECUTIONS.

NOW, WAIT A MINUTE! ALL WE WERE TRYING TO DO WAS HELP YOUR WORLD!
HELP US?

"FOOL, YOU MAY HAVE DESTROYED US!
"OUR POWER IS GONE...


" OUR PEOPLE ARE DYING...

". AND A WAR IS BEGINNING THAT IS SURE TO END CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT!
"IS THAT HOW YOU INTENDED TO HELP US?"

WORK HARDER, MACHINERS! WE HAVE TO BE IN TOP CONDITION WHEN WE MEET DARKFORCE AGAIN. TITAN, ADD ANOTHER TON OF RESISTANCE TO THOSE LIFTS BLAZER, I WANT YOU TO TRIM ANOTHER THIRTEEN SECONDS OFF YOUR TIME IN THAT COURSE. TALISMAN, GET TO WORK!
WHAT FOR? I CAN'T TRAIN MY LUCK!
TALISMAN, START WORKING OUT NOW OR I WILL ISSUE YOU AN IMMED ALPHA-GRADE FIELD DEMOTION!
IN CASE YOU'RE NOT UP ON YOUR REGS, TALISMAN, THAT MEANS DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD-- FOR WHICH I WILL HAPPILY VOLUNTEER!
CHALLENGER?

CHALLENGER, WE HAVE TO TALK.
IT WILL HAVE TO WAIT. THIS IS VITAL TO...

NO, IT WON'T WAIT, CHALLENGER. IT'S ABOUT THE ELEMENTALS.

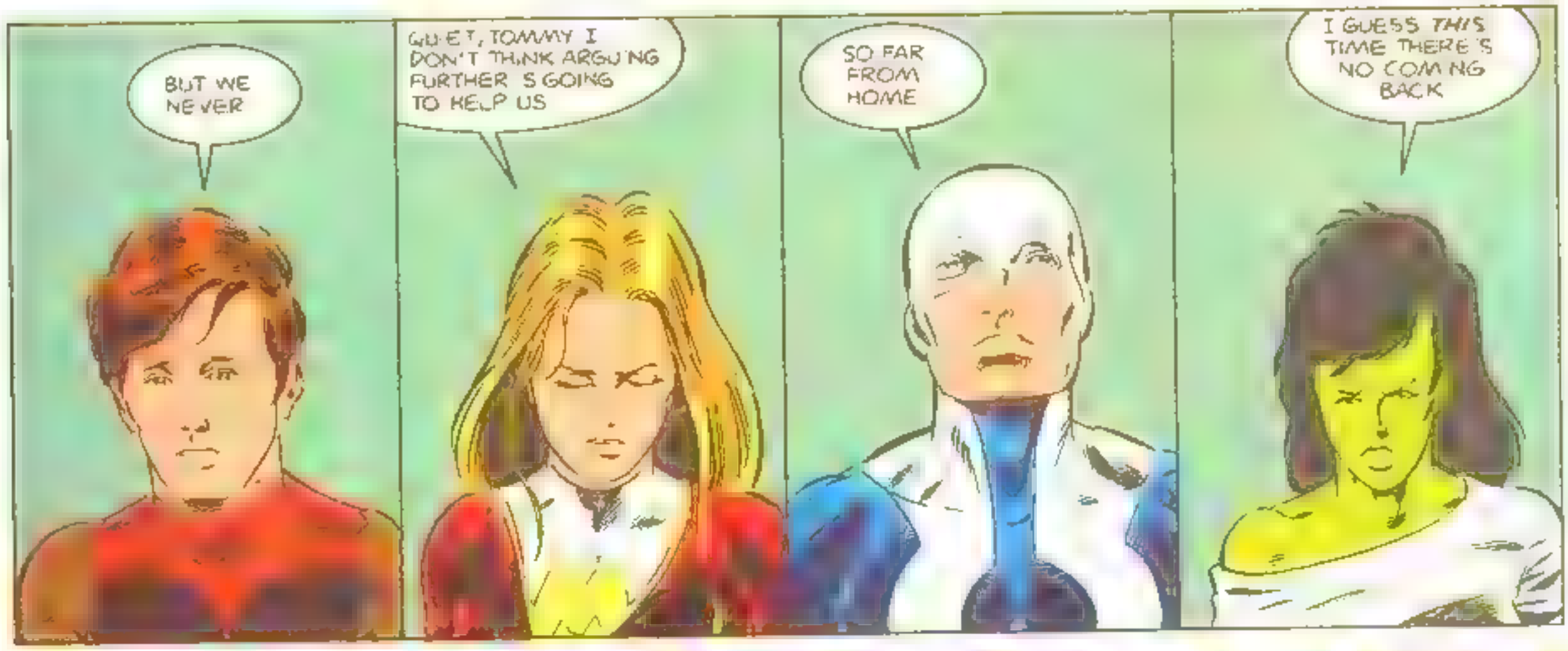
EVERY SENSE I HAVE SAYS THEY WERE TELLING THE TRUTH. THEY BELIEVED THEY WERE GOING TO SAVE PEOPLE.
THEY CAN'T DIE FOR THAT.

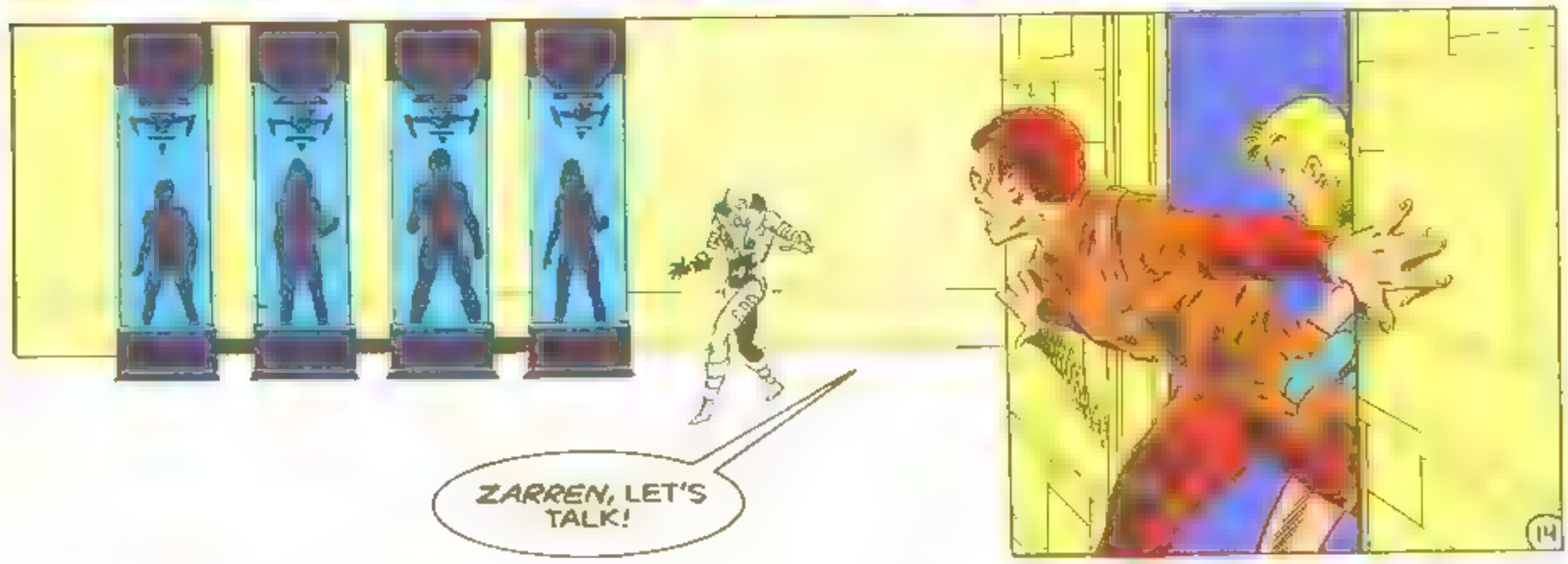
MILLIONS ALREADY HAVE! DARKFORCE IS NO MORE A FREEDOM FIGHTER THAN...ZARREN IS!

THAT'S NOT THE POINT, BOSS. AS MUCH AS I HATE TO TAKE THEIR SIDE, THE ELEMENTALS AREN'T OUR ENEMIES.
THEY'RE ABOUT TO PAY FOR DARKFORCE'S CRIMES.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO? WE HAVE AN ASSAULT ON DARKFORCE TO PLAN!

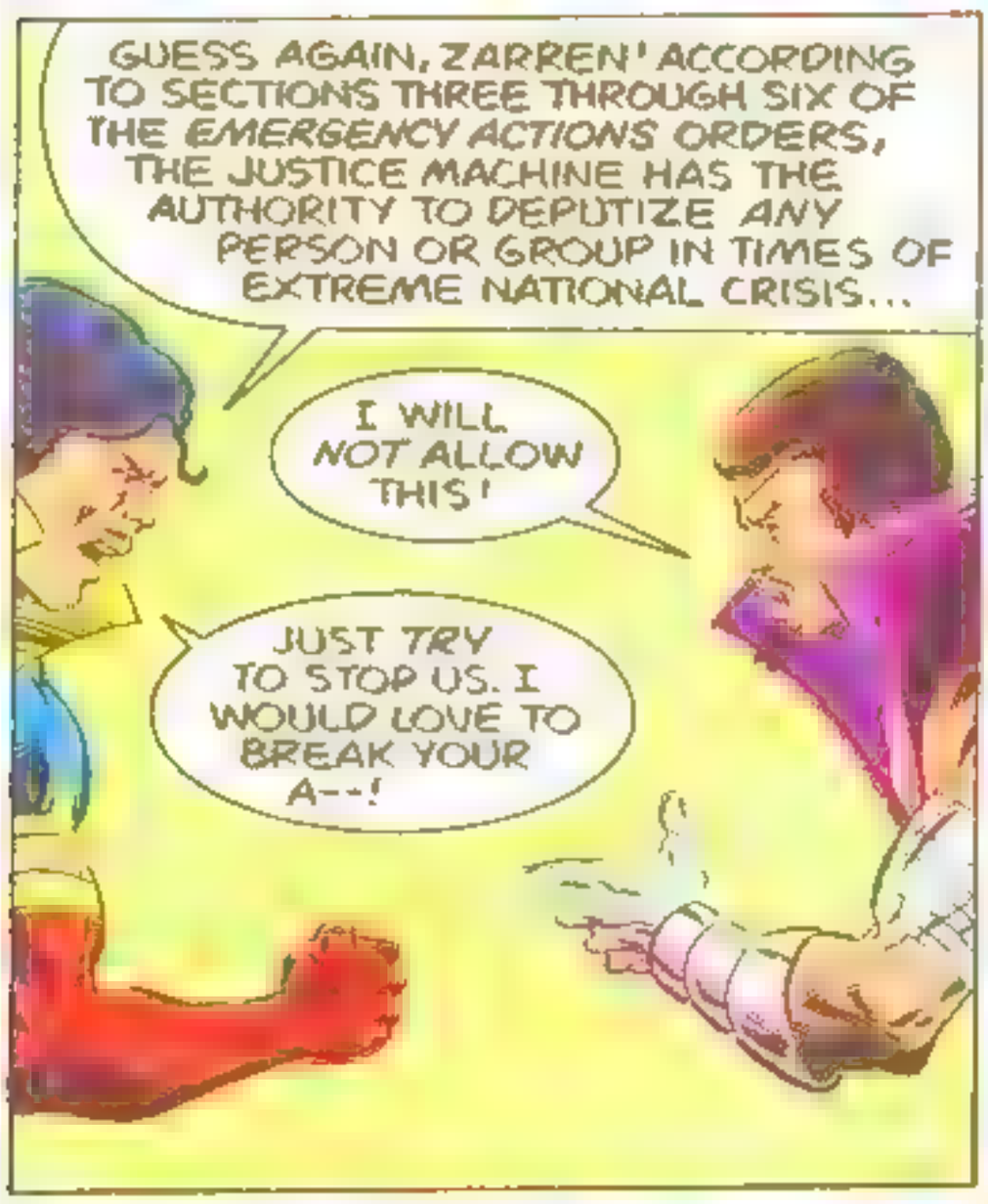
MURDER, SABOTAGE, AND OTHER CRIMES BOTH HIGH AND SMALL AGAINST THE FREE BROTHERHOOD OF GEORWELL AND ITS MEMBER COLONIES. YOU ARE SENTENCED TO DIE BY METHOD OF *MOLECULAR DISPERSION.*

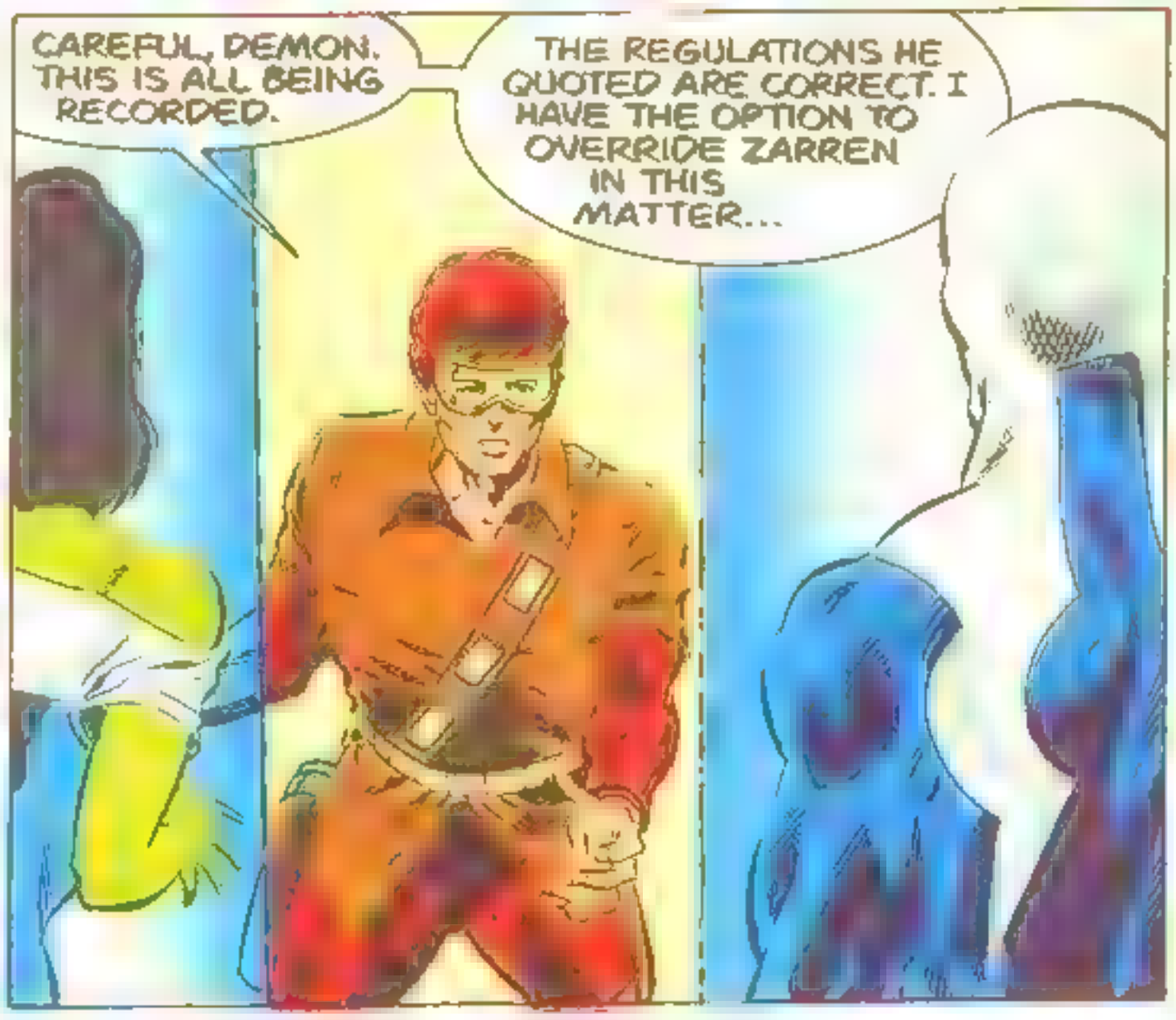


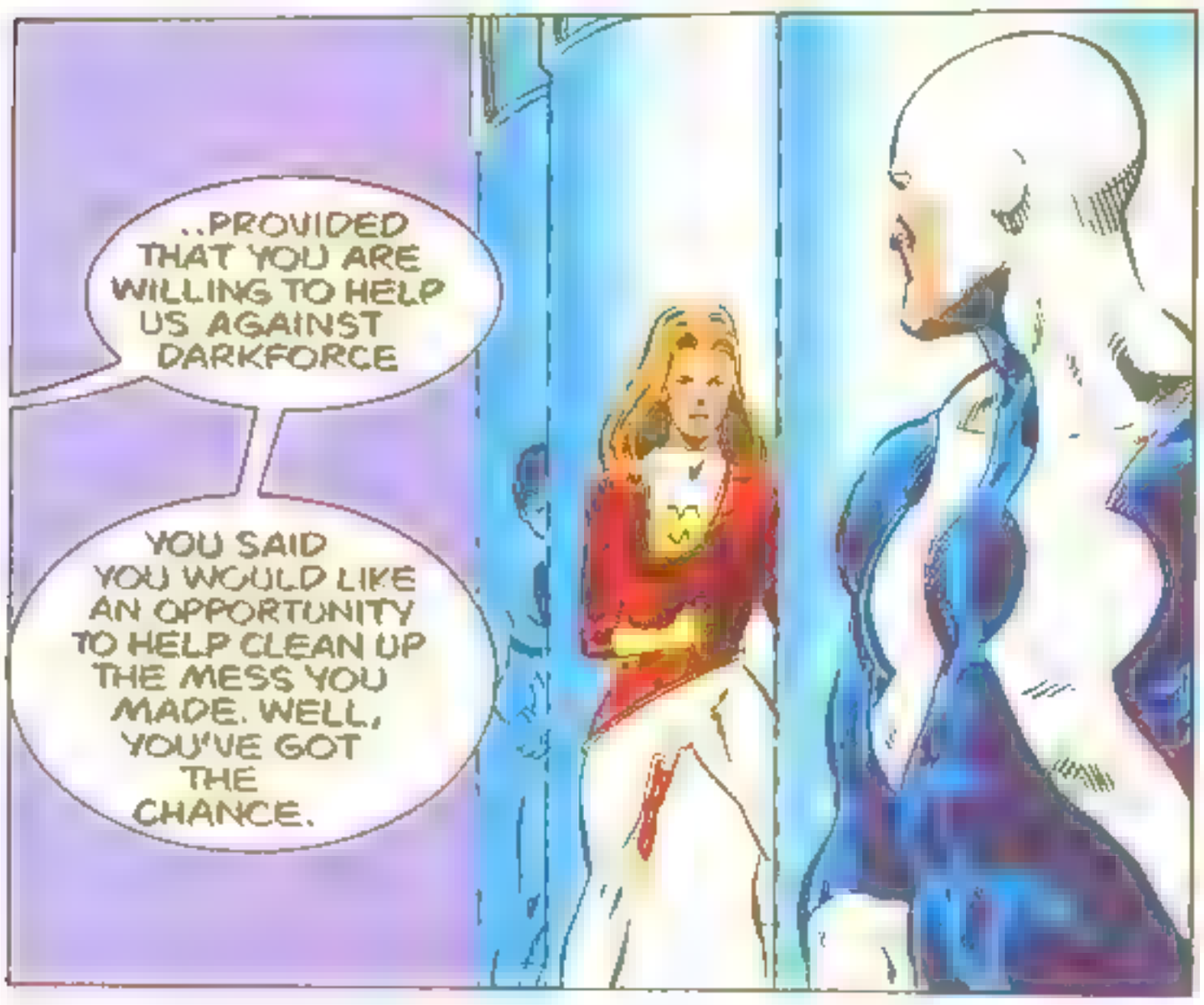


I AM ORDERING THE RELEASE OF THE ELEMENTALS INTO MY CUSTODY-- EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY!
THE HELL YOU SAY!

YOU ARE VASTLY OVERSTEPPING YOUR AUTHORITY TO EVEN SUGGEST...


GUESS AGAIN, ZARREN! ACCORDING TO SECTIONS THREE THROUGH SIX OF THE EMERGENCY ACTIONS ORDERS, THE JUSTICE MACHINE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DEPUTIZE ANY PERSON OR GROUP IN TIMES OF EXTREME NATIONAL CRISIS...
I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS!
JUST TRY TO STOP US. I WOULD LOVE TO BREAK YOUR A--!

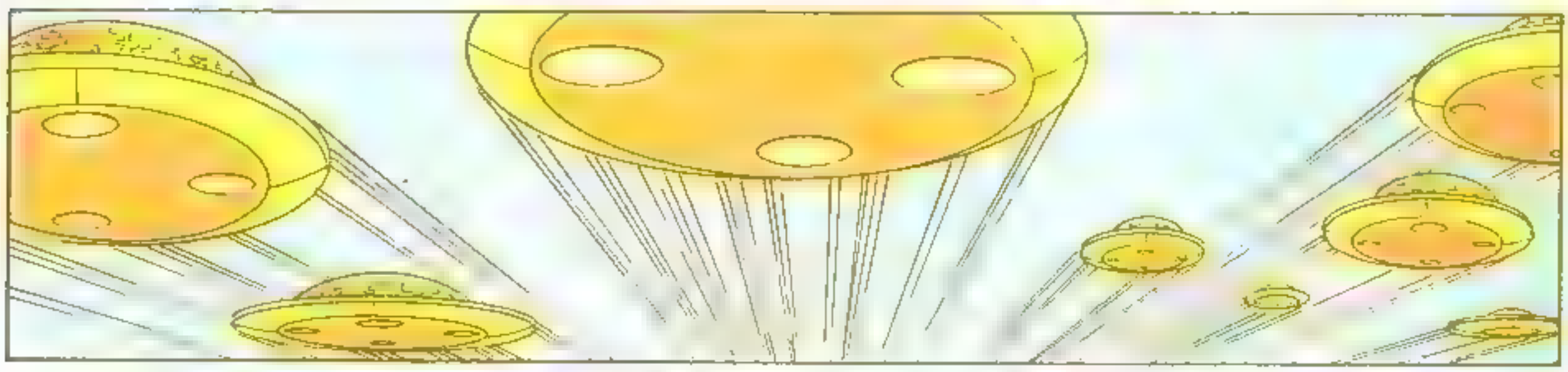

CAREFUL, DEMON. THIS IS ALL BEING RECORDED.
THE REGULATIONS HE QUOTED ARE CORRECT. I HAVE THE OPTION TO OVERRIDE ZARREN IN THIS MATTER...

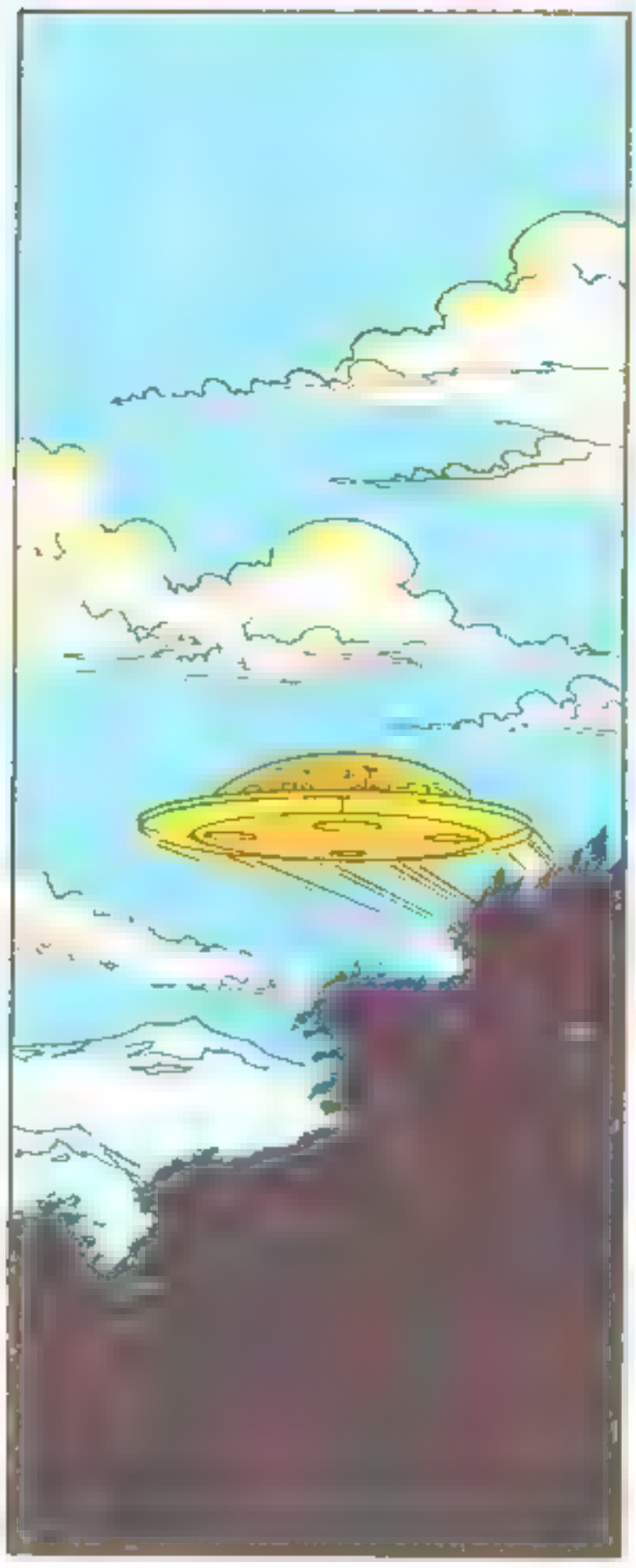

..PROVIDED THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP US AGAINST DARKFORCE
YOU SAID YOU WOULD LIKE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP CLEAN UP THE MESS YOU MADE. WELL, YOU'VE GOT THE CHANCE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

ACTIVATE THE GATEWAY!
PLAAAANNNNNNNN
"NOW! LET THE FORCES COME THROUGH!"
DELIVER GEORWELL TO ME AND I WILL UNLEASH YOU ON THE STARS!
16

"YOU MUST REACH EVERY CORNER OF GEORWELL WHILE THE PEOPLE ARE STILL IN A PANIC!"

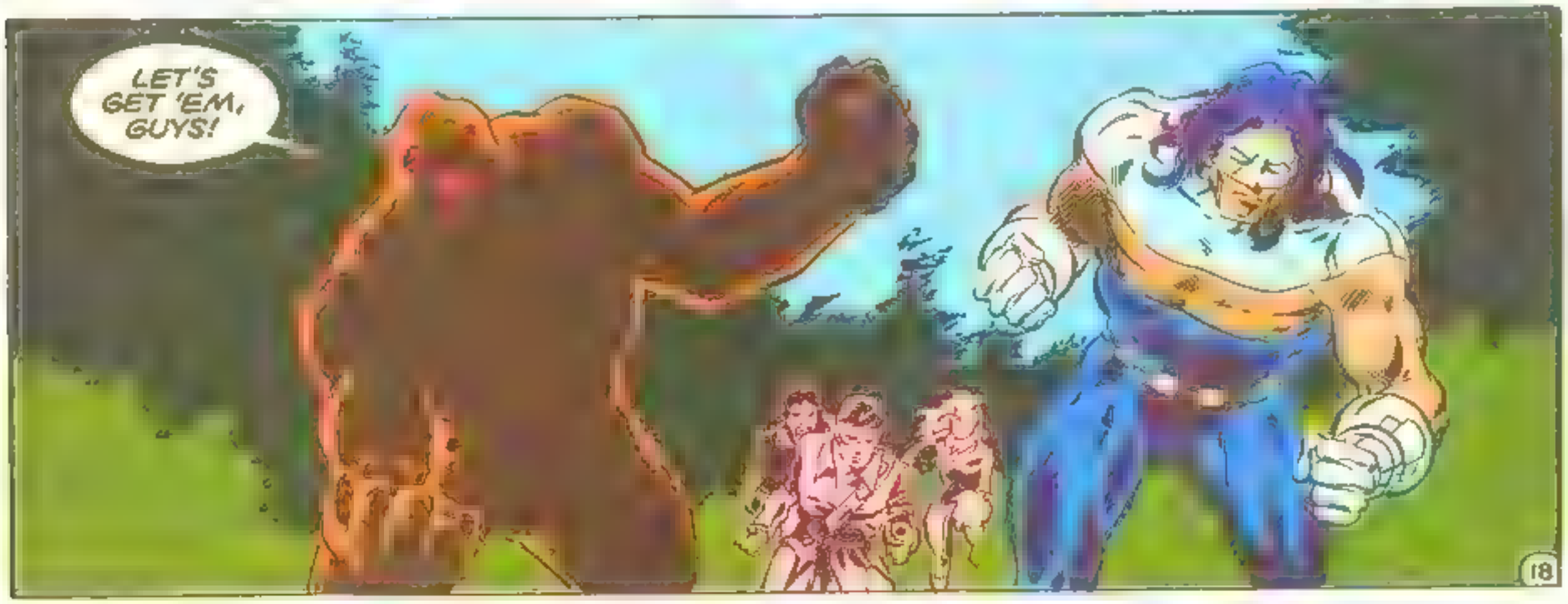




CHALLENGER TO DEMON. ARE YOU SET?

WE'RE IN POSITION, BOSS. JUST WAITING FOR YOUR WORD TO GO.

"THE WORD IS GIVEN."
GO! GO!


LET'S GET 'EM, GUYS!

SSCCRAAACCKK!!
WE'RE IN!
KEEP GOING! WE'VE GOT A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER!
KKAA THOOM
LET'S KICK SOME ASS!
LESS TALK--MORE ACTION!

HIT 'EM HARD, MACHINERS!

MY GOD! WHAT ARE THEY?!

WHO CARES? THEY'RE THE ENEMY! THEY'RE TARGETS!

RESISTANCE IS PILING UP, CHALLENGER!

DON'T STOP FOR INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENTS! JUST MUSCLE THROUGH THEM!

THEY'RE BEGINNING TO CLOSE IN, DEMON!
DON'T PANIC ON ME NOW, DARLIN' WE'LL GET THROUGH IF I HAVE TO PLANT MY BOOT ON EVERY BUTT-UGLY ONE OF THEM!
THEY JUST KEEP COMING! THEY'RE STARTING TO SLOW US DOWN!
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE OUR LINK-UP WITH DEMON'S GROUP! A PINCER MOVEMENT IS NO DAMN GOOD, UNLESS IT'S PROPERLY CLOSED DO YOUR JOB, MAN!
ZZZAAPP!
21

THIS IS GETTING OUT OF HAND! DO YOU THINK CHALLENGER'S PLAN WILL WORK, JEFF?
NO PLAN SURVIVES CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY, FATHOM! BUT AT THE MOMENT, IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT
DON'T WORRY, THOUGH! I'LL STAY WITH YOU.
KA-DOOM!
22

I'M LOSING THE POWER-CAR!
HEY, GUYS, WAIT UP... OOFF!
OH, NO! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING TO ME!
IT'S NOT FAIR!
23

WE DID IT! WE LINKED UP BUT WE DIDN'T PLAN ON BRINGING SO MANY WITH US!
WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT THROUGH TO DARKFORCE! WHAT DO WE DO?!
DO...? I GUESS WE JUST KEEP FIGHTING UNTIL THEY GET US!

DO YOU SEE, GENERAL? TAROT? IT IS JUST AS I HAVE TOLD YOU!

"THE OUTCOME OF THIS DAY WAS WRITTEN YEARS AGO...

"...WHEN I BEGAN TO PLAN MY CONQUEST OF GEORWELL.

"THE OVERRATED JUSTICE MACHINE IS *IMPOTENT* BEFORE ME.

"AND NOT EVEN THE INTERFERENCE OF THESE...ELEMENTALS...

"...HAS SERVED TO THWART MY PLANS."

"IT IS OVER.

ZZZKOW!

"THEY HAVE FALLEN.

"I HAVE WON THE DAY."

GEORWELL IS MINE!
TO BE CONCLUDED.

LETTERS OF THE LAW

• 1547 DeKALB ST. • NORRISTOWN, PA 19401 •

As we mentioned last issue, in order to ensure a JM letters page and to get some vital feedback on our newest super-team series, we solicited the opinions of some of the industry's most dedicated and outspoken readers. The response we received was overwhelming, and as you may have noticed by now, we took some of your valuable suggestions to heart. You see, the pen *is* mightier than the sword—at least within the forum of comic book commentary.

This is an open forum, by the way, so if you've got something to say, let us hear it. Meanwhile . . .

Dear Comico,

JUSTICE MACHINE #1 didn't leave me terribly moved. I was moved—just not terribly.

Please forgive my ignorance concerning the Machine's background, but it left question marks over my head throughout much of the issue, nevertheless. So, while the opening assault by the Machine worked as a visual intro to their abilities, I would have preferred some further insight into the team's origin and past. A deeper look at the workings of Georwell would've been nice too, but then again, this is only the first issue. It came off as sort of a "teaser" issue—a risky practice, but it guarantees a return for the remainder of the series.

Because of the showcase nature of this issue, characterization seemed slighted somewhat. While I agree that forced characterization can fail (humans aren't really that easy to figure out), we also have only four issues to get to know and hopefully grow to like these people. Talisman intrigues me the most. Not only does he look unheroic, but "Get me out of here!" in the heat of battle? Very interesting.

Mike Gustovich's artwork has the necessary shine a team book needs. This is some of his best work, probably due to his love for his creations. Nice costume designs, too.

As a team, I have not learned enough about the Justice Machine to give my undying loyalty. But as a story, issue #1 impressed me enough to be back next issue. And that's really the bottom line, isn't it? Thank you for the sneak peek.

Carleton K. Brown
Springfield, MA

—Hopefully by now, Carleton, you (and any other readers who missed the Noble issues of JUSTICE MACHINE) have gotten somewhat more insight into the team's background—make sure to check out last issue's editorial in this regard. Some good news is that you will have more than these four issues to scope out the Machiners, since a regular JM series will debut later this year with artist Mike Gustovich and writer Tony Isabella at the creative helm. Stay tuned for details . . .

Dear Guys,

First of all, thanks a lot for making me one of the chosen few to review JUSTICE MACHINE FEATURING THE ELEMENTALS! My verdict is that I enjoyed it very much! Being not very familiar with any of the characters, I found it very easy to follow and exciting to get into! My only regret is that I didn't get to see it in full color, but hey, Mike Gustovich's use of blacks and whites was terrific! It was great to see you taking advantage of full-page spreads. I loved the opening battle scene(s), especially when Darkforce staggers and plunges forward on page 13. Personalities came through beautifully with Bill Willingham's script. Favorites were the vanishing act on page 17, and Monica's comment about Lois Lane on page 18. Both supergroups are fascinating enough to make me wanna see more. Keep up the good work, and I'll be looking for it on the stands!

Neil Ahlquist
Columbia Heights, MN

Dear Editor,

Well, I, for one, am very glad to see the Justice Machine back in action and lookin' good.

"The Darkforce Affair" was a nice story to start the ball rolling at Comico. I'm not going to go on about the art or the story, like most letters of comment. What I want to talk about is the dialogue and the way the main characters move with each other.

Bill Willingham has a very nice way with the speech patterns of the Justice Machine. They talk like most normal people would. Believe it or not, that's rare in an action-adventure comic book. If you don't believe me, just pick up a book written by Marv Wolfman or Chris Claremont. Those two are about the worst with common folk dialogue. The Justice Machine members speak in short, no frills dialogue. When a person is engaged in a lot of action, there isn't a lot of time for chatter. Ask anybody who's been through some military training or, for that matter, any kind of physical training. You'll find that you can't shoot the breeze and thump the guy at the same time. Another thing that I liked about the way Bill did things was the fact that there were no lecture speeches by the heroes or the bad boys. I have found that these "Let-me-tell-you-the-history-of-all-living-beings-while-I-clean-your-clock" speeches are the most boring things to have to read. Don't get me wrong. Everything was not sunshine and roses. I did not like the way the members of the team kept mentioning different maneuvers during a fight. This reminded me too much of the X-Men's famous "Alley-Oop" move with Wolverine and Colossus.

Another thing that I would have liked to have seen was no Elementals in the series. Why? Because I think that the Justice Machine, along with the creative team, has enough strength to make the series work without riding on the coattails of the popular Elementals.

I lied. I *am* going to say something about the artwork. At the Chicago Comicon I got to see Mike Gustovich do some work and talk to the readers. I was impressed with his fast work without losing quality and his good nature towards the fans. When I see Mike's work, I see a lot of Kirby and Steranko influences along with Mike's own style. That ain't bad company to run with.

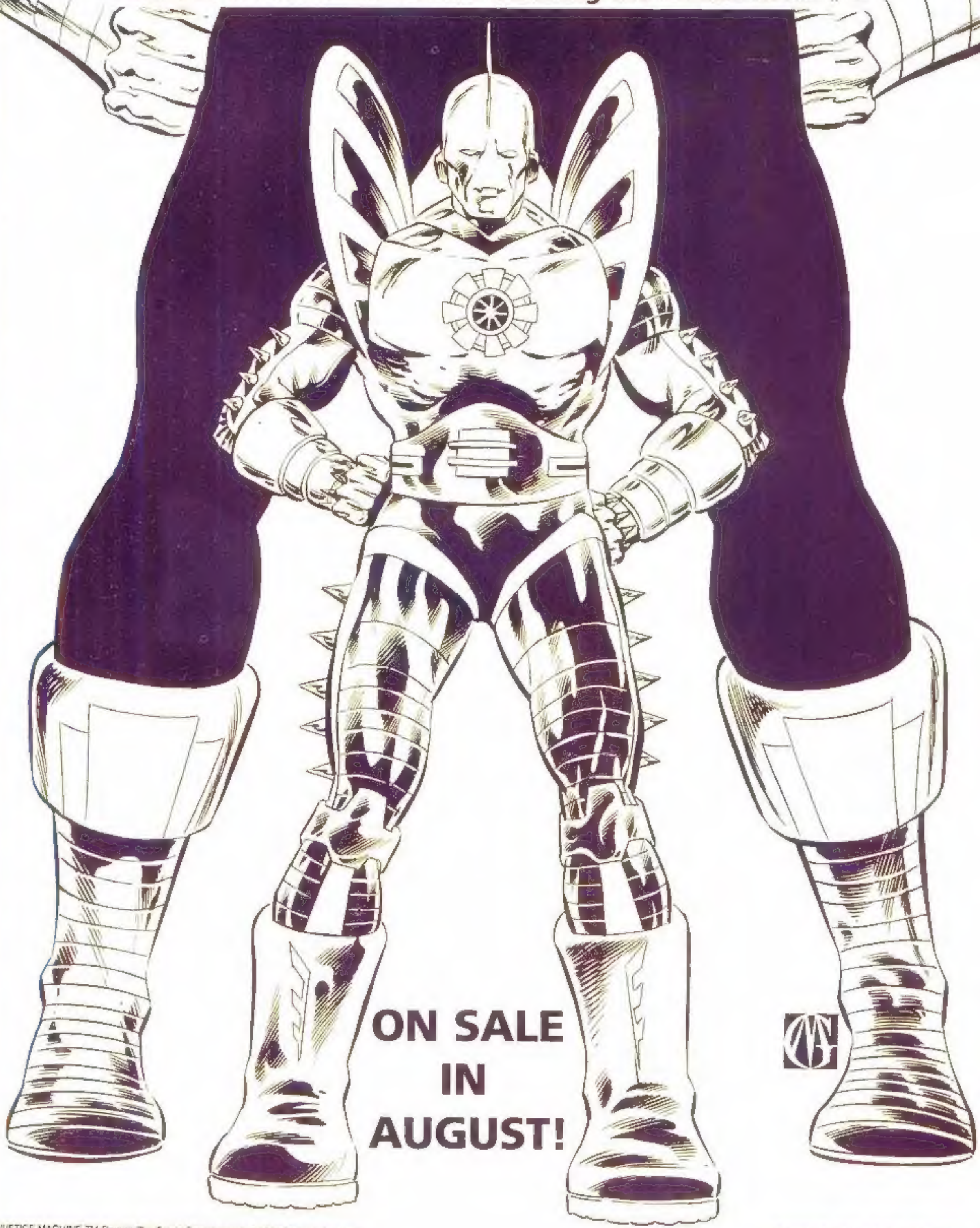
I wish you all luck and good fortune with the JUSTICE MACHINE. I'll be here watching the progress.

Stay outta trouble,
Stephen Scott Beau Smith
COMICAST, Inc.
Huntington, WV

—And we'll be looking for all of you next issue, when this dramatic limited series reaches its electrifying conclusion and we print the last of the many insightful and candid letters commenting on JM #1. See you in 30.

Who is DARKFORCE?

Find out in JUSTICE MACHINE featuring the ELEMENTALS #4.



ON SALE IN AUGUST!

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